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ABSTRACT

The feature article of this issue discusses state initiatives to address high-risk alcohol and other drug (AOD) use among college and university students. These efforts have focused mainly on networking, information sharing, and professional development. Many are based on the initiative developed by Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth, an approach to prevention that uses campus and community teams in cooperative and coordinated efforts to reduce AOD use. More than 20 states now engage in some sort of statewide program, usually with support from the federal government. "What's Up in Arkansas and New York?" discusses the statewide prevention efforts targeting college students in these states. A profile of Graham B. Spanier, president of The Pennsylvania State University, focuses on his efforts to reduce AOD use on the campus. "A Matter of Degree: A Tale of Two Campuses" describes AOD use prevention programs at the University of Vermont, Burlington, and the University of Colorado, Boulder that are sponsored by the National Effort To Reduce High-Risk Drinking among College Students. "Media Reports of Harvard's College Alcohol Study Create a Misleading Portrait of College Student Drinking" by Helen C. Stubbs and William Dejong discusses the findings form a study of student alcohol use that gives some reasons for optimism. Other sections of the issue review news from regions of the Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse and other U.S. programs. (SLD)

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The State of the States ...
When It Comes to Prevention

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A Publication of the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention
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The State of the States ... When It Comes to Prevention

During the past 15 years, several states have started initiatives to address high-risk alcohol and other drug (AOD) use among college and university students. These efforts have focused mainly on networking, information-sharing, and professional development; many involved developing regional or statewide consortia and convening a statewide AOD prevention meeting. Virginia, New York, and Illinois were early leaders in this type of initiative.

In 1996, Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth launched an initiative to combat high-risk alcohol use on college and university campuses from an environmental perspective using campus and community teams. Thanks to the support of state and federal government agencies and local and national AOD prevention organizations, nearly 40 institutions of higher education (IHEs) in Ohio have organized new campus and community teams over a three-year period. Many other states are adopting a similar approach, creating a nationwide movement to bring together colleges and universities within a state in a coordinated effort to create campus and community change.

"An important part of the success of these statewide initiatives is the collaboration that takes place, not only among campuses within the states, but also among the states."

This approach to prevention has enormous value. As several campuses in the same state move forward at the same time, they benefit from mutual support and information-sharing, create momentum for change, and strengthen their ability to influence policy decisions.

The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention worked closely with the Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth statewide initiative, both providing support and monitoring activities to learn how other states could benefit most from Ohio's experiences. Center staff also broadly publicized this effort, believing that a state initiative of this sort is one major strategy for advancing the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) AOD prevention agenda, particularly the initiative's emphasis on encouraging campus and community teams to create environmental change.

Using an environmental approach, Ohio Parents, a private, nonprofit foundation, organized a series of activities to address "binge drinking" among students on campuses. The Center provided three training sessions for campus and community teams. The training focused on outcome-based strategic planning, coalition-building, social marketing, and project evaluation.

In 1998, Ohio Parents conducted a follow-up survey of 31 participating institutions to determine what changes had taken place as a result of this comprehensive intervention. Prior to the statewide initiative, less than 10 percent of these campuses reported having had an action plan to reduce or eliminate high-risk alcohol use. At follow-up, [illegible] percent reported having an action plan. Of those with action plans, 94 percent said they incorporated environmental approaches; 62 percent reported incorporating specific activities expected to affect the campus environment. Such activities include creating alternative activities, improving relationships between bar owners and merchants, expanding coalitions, developing and reinforcing policy, and using the media to counter misperceived norms about student alcohol use. While no statewide initiatives have outcome data—such as reductions in high-risk drinking or crime—to report as yet, the Ohio initiative has a 1999 Department of Education grant that includes provisions for an outcome evaluation, as do all of the 1999 grantees.

More than 20 states now engage in some sort of statewide initiative, many of them based on Ohio's successful program. And while ED has funded the development of campus and community coalitions for a number of years, its 1999 grant competition underscored the importance of statewide and

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The Statewide Initiatives Leadership Institute

More than 50 leaders of existing and emerging initiatives in 25 states participated in a Statewide Initiatives Leadership Institute held in Tampa, Fla., by the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention in February 2000.

Participants included representatives from state alcohol and other drug programs, state alcoholic beverage control departments, community anti-drug and Reduce Underage Drinking coalitions, and colleges and universities.

According to Laurie Davidson, a Center associate director who helps state leaders start their initiatives, the meeting's goal was to enable leaders of existing initiatives exchange ideas and strategies.

"We think there is great potential for a concerted statewide initiative to bring about changes in the environment that promotes high-risk and underage alcohol use among students on campuses," said Davidson. "Most of the environmental changes, however, were limited to the campus, such as however, were limited to the campus, such as increasing the number of alcohol-free social and recreational options. At this meeting we wanted to find out what was getting in the way of implementing environmental strategies aimed at the community."

One barrier described by participants is a lack of the community organizing skills needed for effective community work. Often the person charged with responding to AOD problems on a campus has a counseling or health education background and needs additional skills to work with community groups.

The Center is creating a WebBoard (a Web-based technology that enables users to post and read messages on particular topics as if they were part of a discussion).

"The single most important thing Center staff can do is to provide ways for statewide initiative leaders to talk to each other about what they are doing," Davidson explained. "Another key area for us is to help people figure out how to evaluate environmental management programs, given the difficulties of trying to measure complex systems change."

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State of the States . . .

regional initiatives—as well as collaborations between campus and community leaders—to address high-risk alcohol use among college and university students. The 1999 Safe and Drug-Free Schools grants competition guidelines asked that applicants mobilize new or existing state or regional coalitions to create plans for broad environmental campus and community change. Eight programs were funded. In some cases, programs will build on existing statewide initiatives. Some will focus on creating local campus and community coalitions, while others will initiate collaboration among state-level partners to influence public policy change.

The statewide initiative strategy provides a range of benefits. Foremost, said William DeJong, Ph.D., Center director, the initiative gives some political cover to IHE staff who might be nervous about stepping to the forefront and dealing with this problem aggressively. Individual institutions are not singled out.

"To this day, despite the publicity about college student deaths and all the prevention activity that is taking place on campuses, I still hear about college presidents who are reluctant to come forward, fearing that if they become active on this agenda, it will make their school look as if it has a problem," said DeJong.

Gordon Gee, former president of the Ohio State University and chair of the Ohio statewide initiative, said: "It's very important that college presidents all jump off the cliff together."

This strategy is also important because it helps to bring media attention to student high-risk alcohol use, and, in particular, to available solutions. The goal is to get the media to focus less on problems and more on solutions—the various initiatives that have made a real improvement on campuses and in communities.

In many cases, state initiatives have attracted resources to support their prevention efforts from state governments, state alcohol control boards, and foundations. Funding sources such as these are more likely to invest in a broader statewide strategy than to support individual institutions.

DeJong pointed out that statewide initiatives also provide an important opportunity for campus and community teams tied to different colleges and universities to support one another. That support is crucial, he said, because "it's hard to grapple with the very difficult work of environmental change at the community level."

The Center has learned from experiences in a number of states the best approaches to help other states start their own initiative.

"We like to provide a presentation on the Center's environmental management approach to alcohol and other drug prevention through a workshop, a conference, or some kind of state summit as a way to promote the idea of a statewide coalition," explained DeJong. "An important step in this process is to get as many college presidents in a state as we can to pledge publicly to become involved with the effort, focus on high-risk alcohol use and environmental strategies, and say that working with their local community is going to be the hallmark of their approach. Presidential leadership is key."

Many states have found it useful to move from such a kick-off event to a campus and community team training, followed by ongoing consultation services from the Center and additional training on more specialized topics. These efforts are aimed at helping states form a statewide consortium to keep different campus and community teams focused on their action plans and to start advocating for specific actions regarding state policy.

"An important part of the success of these statewide initiatives is the collaboration that takes place, not only among campuses within the states, but also among the states, the Center, and the Department of Education. These efforts are showing that campus and community change is indeed possible," said DeJong.

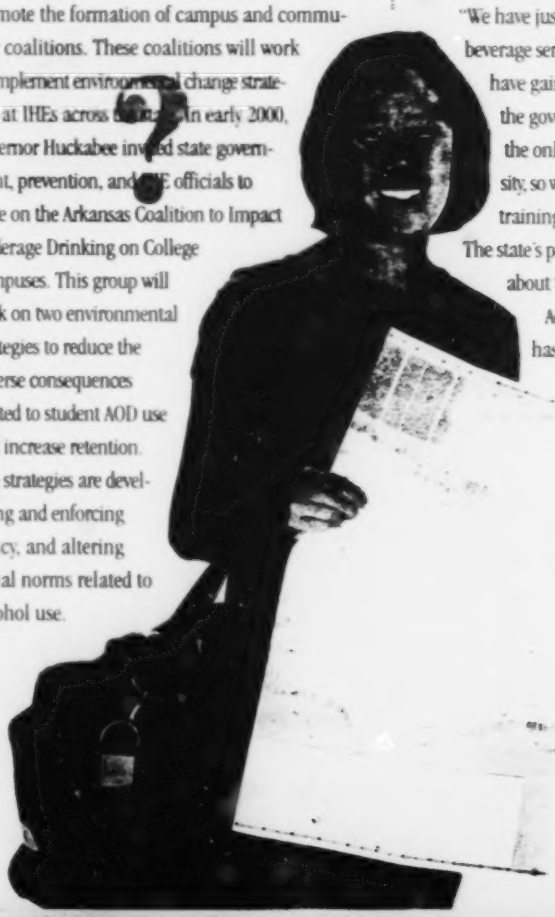
What's up in Arkansas and New York?

Statewide campus and community prevention efforts in Arkansas and New York are at opposite ends of the statewide initiative development. While one initiative is relatively new, the other began more than a decade ago.

Arkansas Leader: Arkansans for Drug-Free Youth

In January 1999, 39 Arkansas college and university presidents pledged to work together to create campus cultures free of AOD problems. At the signing event, convened by Arkansans for Drug-Free Youth (ADFY), Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee praised the group of presidents and statewide leaders for their efforts to "take a stand against alcohol abuse on college campuses."

Thus began Arkansas's statewide campus AOD prevention initiative. Following the signing event, ADFY and the Arkansas College Drug Education Committee (ACDEC) sponsored a series of trainings to promote the formation of campus and community coalitions. These coalitions will work to implement environmental change strategies at IHEs across the state. In early 2000, Governor Huckabee invited state government, prevention, and IHE officials to serve on the Arkansas Coalition to Impact Underage Drinking on College Campuses. This group will work on two environmental strategies to reduce the adverse consequences related to student AOD use and increase retention. The strategies are developing and enforcing policy, and altering social norms related to alcohol use.



Betty Herron, former executive director of ADFY, worked with the Higher Education Center to develop the Arkansas initiative. "The Center has brought the environmental approach to us, and we have coordinated a grassroots response through the campus and community coalitions. [With the creation of] the statewide coalition, we will be able to provide assistance in the broader perspective," she said.

Like many states that have embarked upon this process, Arkansas IHEs have found that forming campus and community coalitions can be slow, hard work. Sometimes, bar owners and others are reluctant to come to the table with law enforcement officials, campus health professionals, and members of other community organizations.

Mary Alice Serafini, director of the University Health Center at the University of Arkansas (U of A), Fayetteville, said that the state-level coalition helps with local campus and community work.

"We have just begun to look at issues around beverage service off campus, and we certainly have gained local momentum because of the governor's interest in the issue. We're the only wet county with a large university, so we've been interested in server training and other protective measures. The state's point of view has helped us learn about the issue," she explained.

According to Serafini, her campus has a long history of taking a health promotion approach to prevention, but is "just beginning to try to make cultural change." U of A has learned from the experience of the campus and community coalition involving the University at Albany, State University of New York, and Albany tavern owners. This fall, the university welcomed students back with "hang tags" on the doorknobs of residence hall rooms and off-campus housing to educate students about laws on alcohol use, noise, and crowd control. In addition, the Health Center hopes to involve area realtors and landlords in the prevention of alcohol-related consequences in off-campus housing through tenant agreements and policies.

One of ACDEC's major accomplishments was funding the administration of the Core Survey at most Arkansas colleges and universities over the last several years. Terry Love, director of Health Promotion and Wellness Services at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) and current chair of ACDEC, described the organization as "way ahead of its time" 20 years ago when the state Department of Health began funding the statewide committee. At that time, people were more concerned about illegal drugs than alcohol, hence the "drug education" focus in the name of the group. Now, Love pointed out, ACDEC takes a broader wellness approach: "The group has moved during the last three years to focus less on activities and more on theory-based prevention, including environmental approaches," he said.

At UCA, Love has a grant from the UCA deans' council to establish a campus and community coalition with three local institutions and a nearby community college. Part of the grant will support both a campaign to change misperceptions of social norms and deterrent activities with fraternities and sororities, including a party monitoring system.

ACDEC—with its bimonthly consortium meetings, annual conference, mini-grants for coalition development or programming, and Web page—provides a variety of ways for Arkansas campuses to collaborate and share ideas.

"Communication is important because people are isolated on their campuses, and we want to encourage them to bounce ideas off each other, to learn from each other's mistakes," said Love.

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Strategizing for Community and Campus Collaboration: A New Resource

Many colleges and universities have taken a more comprehensive approach to reducing student alcohol and other drug problems by entering into partnerships with community-based groups to work together on developing solutions. Now communities have a new resource to help them take the initiative when it comes to working with campuses on shared problems related to student alcohol and other drug use.

The Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) has just added *Working in Partnership with Local Colleges and Universities* to its series of *Strategizer Technical Assistance Manuals* to provide community-based coalitions with step-by-step guidance on working with colleges and universities.

This *Strategizer 34*, written by William DeJong, Ph.D., and Joel Epstein, J.D., of the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, describes various policy options and activities that town/gown coalitions can work on jointly to reduce problems. It also provides community coalitions with insight on how colleges and universities function so that they can reach out effectively to enlist their support. For example, one way to get campus involvement is to seek out the institution's president and encourage him or her to take a leadership role in the community in addressing these problems.

To obtain a copy of *Working in Partnership with Local Colleges and Universities*, call the Higher Education Center at (800) 676-1730, send an e-mail to HigherEdCtr@edc.org, or order online/download a copy from the Center's Web site at http://www.edc.org/hec.

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What's up in Arkansas and New York?

New York: State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services

Alcohol and other drug prevention in the campus setting has been a major focus of the New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) since 1983. The OASAS IHE program has three basic elements: (1) the publication of *Networking for Healthy Campuses*, a how-to manual for developing prevention programs on campus; (2) support for the formation of regional campus alcohol and other drug prevention consortia; and (3) a statewide campus consortia steering committee.

In 1990, OASAS expanded the consortia project by forming a statewide steering committee, the next step in the first initiative of this kind led by a state substance abuse agency. Throughout the decade, OASAS held team trainings at which community alcohol and other drug prevention workers were required to bring a college representative to participate in the training.

In 1998, OASAS conducted the first statewide Core Survey, providing campuses with good baseline data. Based on the findings of this survey and mounting concerns about high-risk drinking, OASAS issued an RFA for the implementation of a norms misperception campaign on the college campus. Ten sites (one in each regional consortia area) were selected and are in the process of implementing their projects. In support of this initiative, OASAS has conducted a series of learning institutes to help the colleges develop the norms misperception projects.

The statewide steering committee, in conjunction with OASAS, has expanded its tasks in 2000. A couple of workgroups have been created to investigate critical issues and develop position papers. Among the areas they will examine are alcohol industry funding of college prevention initiatives, harm reduction strategies, the possibility that norms misperception projects may institutionalize high-risk alcohol use, and why first- and second-year college students who do not report high-risk drinking in high school engage in the behavior when they start college.

"Communication is important because people are isolated on their campuses, and we want to encourage them to bounce ideas off each other, to learn from each other's mistakes."

Addiction Program Specialist Merry Lyng points to the experience of the University at Albany, State University of New York, and the Albany community as an example of how a community can benefit by collaborating with colleges. During the early 1990s, the Albany Committee on University and Community Relations launched initiatives aimed at improving enforcement of local laws and ordinances, created a safety awareness campaign for off-campus students, and developed a comprehensive advertising and beverage service agreement with local tavern owners. As a result, the number of alcohol-related problems in the community decreased. Both the number of calls to a university hotline for reporting off-campus problems and the number of off-campus noise ordinance reports filed by police decreased. According to Lyng, the Albany coalition was recently honored on its 10th anniversary by Mayor Gerald Jennings for its success in making the Albany community a safer and healthier place for its citizens.

The University at Albany is also one of the 10 schools being funded by OASAS to conduct a social norms marketing campaign. In 2001, OASAS plans to fund an additional 15 campuses to conduct social norms campaigns and will continue its tradition of sponsoring an annual AOD prevention conference. Lyng wishes more of her colleagues in state substance abuse offices across the country would take the lead in creating or supporting statewide campus AOD prevention initiatives. "State substance abuse officials are looked to as experts in their states, so we should be involved in this issue," she said.

PRESIDENTIAL PROFILES

Graham B. Spanier
The Pennsylvania State University

Graham B. Spanier, Ph.D., has been president of The Pennsylvania State University since 1995. He earned his Ph.D. in sociology from Northwestern University, where he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. He also holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Iowa State University. Spanier is chair of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Board of Directors and a member of the association's Executive Committee. He chairs the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities and the Council of Presidents of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

Q: You have said to high school students: "If you are interested in Penn State because of your attraction to binge drinking, please go somewhere else." What response have you received to your outspoken stance against high-risk alcohol use by students?

A: The response has been very positive, from parents and lots of prospective students, as well as from our faculty, staff, alumni, donors, state legislators, and the public at large. We have seen a little negativism among some of our current students, who wish that we wouldn't spend so much time on this issue and feel that we should get off their backs about drinking.

Initially, some people thought that by talking openly about student alcohol use we would see a decline in applications—that some students wouldn't want to come to Penn State because we were talking about it. That has not been the case, and actually our applications have gone up significantly. Certainly it can be said that paying a lot of attention to student drinking has neither prevented people from coming here, nor hurt our reputation. Rather, our reputation has been enhanced. Many people tell us that they want their child to go to Penn State because we are taking a stand on this problem.

Q: Have you made changes in student recruitment?

A: We send our students a letter telling them that student alcohol use is a concern of ours and that if they are coming here expecting to engage in high-risk drinking, we will gladly refund their application fee and deposit. Other than that, we have not done anything differently. Have we noticed a change in the kinds of students applying? Not really, although applications are going up. It's too early to tell if students are coming with a different set of expectations. However, from the materials they receive from me ahead of time and from what they hear me say at convocation and in other early messages, they do know what our expectations are.

Q: What changes are you making at Penn State to prevent future alcohol-related disturbances and other problems?

A: We now spend a lot of time talking about student drinking and related problems to give these issues more visibility. Our vice president for student affairs has the lead role and oversees a commission on the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. We have a very good working relationship with our surrounding community and have a formal university and community partnership. We hold regular meetings with leaders of several fraternities, who are very involved in this prevention initiative. A number of fraternities have decided to go dry within the next few years.

We have dramatically increased our alcohol-free programming. In my opinion, that's perhaps the single best thing that the university can do. After spending hours talking to students, I have learned that what they most want is an active social life. In reality, very few students start an evening saying, "My goal this evening is to drink and only drink, and I don't care about anything else." Most of them want to have a good time, and if there are other ways to have a good time, they may very well decide not to drink. But short of some alternative, they will do so.

Q: Do you have suggestions for other academic leaders concerning how they can actively prevent high-risk alcohol and other drug use by students?

A: They can certainly look around the country at what some of the more active colleges and universities are doing in response to student alcohol-related problems. We all have much to learn from each other. We need to continue to talk about it ourselves in our academic forums, and that is happening more and more now.

Editor's note: A longer interview with President Spanier is posted on the Center's Web site at http://www.edc.org/hec.

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A Matter of Degree: *A Tale of*

In response to alarming statistics about high-risk alcohol use by college students and reports of alcohol-related problems on campuses across the country, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) in 1996 embarked on an ambitious program to identify the environmental factors that converge to encourage high-risk alcohol use by students. Called A Matter of Degree: The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students (AMOD), the program has provided about $700,000 over five years to each of 10 campuses to foster collaboration between participating universities and the communities in which they are located as a way to address alcohol problems and improve the quality of life for all community residents. The American Medical Association manages the AMOD program out of its national office in Chicago. Two AMOD campuses from the first round of funding are nearing the end of their project. Below, the AMOD project coordinators on these campuses discuss the project and the lessons they have learned from it.

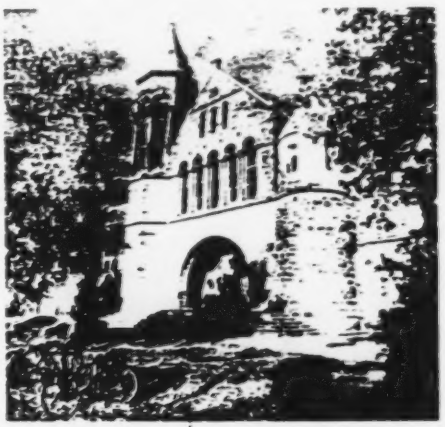
The University of Vermont, Burlington

by Rick Culliton

The University of Vermont's (UVM) Coalition to Create a Quality Learning Environment was developed in 1997 with the support of the RWJF. This project to reduce high-risk alcohol use in our community includes a comprehensive environmental change strategy intended to create lasting change. Over the past five years, Burlington and Vermont have experienced a decrease in youth access to alcohol, increased enforcement of underage drinking laws, and implementation of stronger drinking and driving laws. Together, the changes in Vermont, in Burlington, and at UVM have greatly shaken the perception that Vermont is a destination for high-risk alcohol use.

Most of our coalition's initiatives have been focused on changing policies, increasing their enforcement, and altering other environmental factors that contribute to high-risk alcohol use. Early in the project, the coalition paid most of its attention to the campus environment at UVM; in the last year, however, the coalition has strategically targeted the environment that surrounds the campus. A brief look at recent efforts follows.

The university's 1998–99 judicial caseload was 10 percent higher than in 1995–96. We believe that the change is the result of increased enforcement efforts by UVM police. Campus offices collaborated to create a more efficient reporting mechanism (university violation notices), greatly reducing undocumented warnings. In addition to increasing enforcement, each student who commits an alcohol and other drug offense is now referred to UVM's Alcohol and Drug Services for follow-up education or treatment or both. This follow-up consists of a two- or six-hour class or more intense individual counseling. Those students mandated to complete the sessions must bear the costs. In 1999–2000, the university began notifying the parents of students who committed alcohol and drug infractions. At the same time as enforcement and interventions have been stepped up, so too have the expectations that repeated and aggravated violations of the code of conduct will result in separating students from the university. As a result, the number of suspensions has more than doubled, from 25 students in 1995–96 to 55 students in 1998–99.



In the general area of environmental change, the university modified its academic calendar to avoid beginning the year with two consecutive three-day weekends. With this important and symbolic step, the university clearly showed that academic rigor, not partying, is central to being a student at the University of Vermont. The Athletics Department no longer advertises alcohol at any athletics event or in any publication or program. The Department of Residential Life increased its substance-free living space on campus for the third straight year, and the number of students choosing to live in substance-free halls has more than doubled over last year.

The Vermont College Alcohol Network (VCAN), on which I serve as cochair, has also made progress in

Two Campuses

terms of collecting statewide data on drinking rates among college students in 19 of the 24 colleges. These data will be used to develop additional statewide training and prevention efforts.

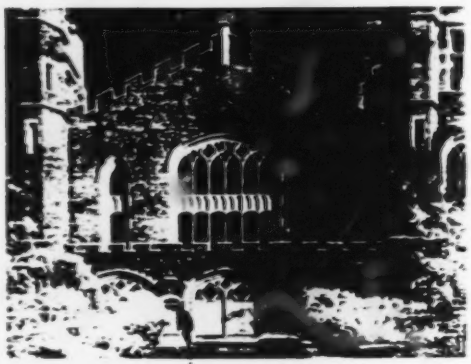
More recently, our coalition's attention has focused on the environment that surrounds the university. After a public disturbance related to a bar closing in Burlington in November 1998, UVM President Ramaley and Mayor Clavelle of Burlington renewed their commitments to addressing alcohol abuse in our community. The president and mayor hosted two citywide meetings to assess the problem of illegal and abusive drinking and, more important, to implement change. The coalition is working with local and state agencies, other colleges, and bar owners to create responsible alcohol service training and guidelines for local bar owners. The mayor has called for greater municipal control to limit the number of alcohol outlets in the city. While the progress on specific policy initiatives has been encouraging, the resolve of the university and city leadership has been even more so.

Rick Culluton is the AMOD project coordinator for the University of Vermont, Burlington. He also serves as a Center Associate for the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention.

The University of Colorado, Boulder

by Robert Maust

In 1997, we received a grant from the RWJF to support us in taking a new approach to reducing high-risk alcohol use among our students. The following statement defines this new approach: "We are incorporating public health concepts and using environmental change strategies, both on the campus and in the local community, in an effort to reduce high-risk drinking behaviors among our students."



This simple statement is clear. But as a senior administrator for more than 30 years in many types of higher education institutions, I have addressed student alcohol and other drug issues at each institution. I know this statement masks many important issues that make our current work very different from what we have done in the past.

Let's first look at where we have been. For many years, our efforts to reduce high-risk use of alcohol among our students generally followed the national trends in this area. For example, we applied a combination of programs designed to (1) educate students about alcohol, (2) provide timely interventions in the lives of students who abused alcohol, and (3) increase the enforcement of laws and policies intended to control the access to and the negative consequences of the use of alcohol. In addition, as we worked on these issues, we would have infrequent meetings with some off-campus people about our efforts. These meetings were rarely with community leaders or other key policymakers, however, but more likely were with middle management campus and community personnel. Furthermore, the agenda for these meetings usually focused on some recent problem our students caused in the community or on how to better manage the delivery of programs and services to our students, such as counseling or diversion programs.

Today, as a result of our involvement in the RWJF-supported program, we are doing some very new and proactive things, such as focusing on how alcohol is priced, promoted, made accessible, and understood in our campus and local communities, in terms of its negative secondary effects. In addition, we have established a town-gown partnership with a wide array of people, including important policymakers, that has regularly scheduled meetings with carefully defined agendas. We also seek to address such new matters as happy hour practices; promotion of drink specials in our campus news media; the outlet density of retail alcohol establishments; and how our coalitions might reduce alcohol-related problems such as vandalism, littering, noise, rioting, and other violations of local laws and campus policies.

Today, colleges and universities that are willing to adopt new approaches, such as applying environmental change strategies to students' high-risk alcohol use, face many challenges. However, the costs—loss of academic potential and challenges to personal safety and even life—of relying exclusively on the limited approaches of the past are simply too great to accept. For all these reasons, and in the great tradition of public health, I believe it is time for higher education to join leaders in the larger community to remove the tap from all sources that are poisoning our environments rather than address only the consequences of these dangerous activities.

Robert Maust is the AMOD project director at the University of Colorado, Boulder. He also serves as a Center Associate for the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention.

NOTE TO THE FIELD

Media Reports of Harvard's College Alcohol Study Create a Misleading Portrait of College Student Drinking

by Helen C. Stubbs and William DeJong

In March 2000, the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study released its 1999 data on high-risk alcohol use on U.S. college campuses. National levels of what the study's authors call "binge drinking" have remained fairly constant throughout the decade at about 44 percent.[1]

The new survey report also contained a lot of good news. Especially noteworthy: The percentage of students who said they did not drink alcohol rose by nearly 4 percent since the 1993 survey (from 15.4 percent to 19.2 percent). Moreover, the new results affirmed that a clear majority (56 percent) of students on campuses either abstain or use alcohol in a low-risk or moderate manner.

The news wasn't all positive. The number of "frequent binge drinkers" (students who binge drink three or more times in a two-week period) rose by almost 3 percent since 1993 (from 19.8 percent to 22.7 percent). This hard-drinking minority puts themselves *and* others in harm's way. As a result, fully one-half of all students consider alcohol to be a problem on their campus.

This finding helps to explain other promising data from the Harvard study. A clear majority of college students support tougher policy controls to reduce alcohol-related problems on campus, including stricter enforcement of campus rules (65 percent) and underage drinking crackdowns (67 percent), restriction of kegs on campus (60 percent), and a ban on ads on campus from local outlets (52 percent).[2]

On balance, this is what the Harvard study had to say: The amount of high-risk alcohol use by a minority of irresponsible students has risen slightly, but a growing number of students are choosing not to imbibe at all. Moreover, we are witnessing a groundswell of student support to address this issue head-on.

Reporters may have been led into a gloomy assessment of the campus drinking scene by the overencompassing definition of binge drinking used in the Harvard study. Binge drinking is defined as five or more drinks in a sitting for men, four or more drinks for women. As any college student will quickly point out, this measure does not account for the time elapsed while drinking, the weight of the drinker, or the food eaten during the drinking episode.

In effect, the Harvard definition of binge drinking labels many students as problem drinkers who by other standards would be said to be drinking moderately. Our concern is that exaggerating the problem in this way will alienate many responsible students who resent being labeled as part of the problem, but who might otherwise be receptive to calls for tougher policies.

Additionally, an inflated assessment of high-risk alcohol use on campus promotes a negative and incorrect perception of the norm on college campuses, which may further drive up levels of high-risk alcohol use among students trying to "fit in."

We are not advocating to raise the bar on the definition of binge drinking, but rather to shift the focus away from a debate over the precise amount of consumption that constitutes alcohol abuse and to concentrate instead on the *consequences* of this behavior.

Alcoholism is not defined in terms of how much people drink, but by the impact of alcohol use on their lives. Likewise, we should define problem alcohol use on campus in terms of its attendant problems. Alcohol-related problems include rape, drunk driving, assaults, injury, overdose, unplanned and unsafe sex, academic failure, and vandalism.

Furthermore, by focusing on these negative consequences, many of which are caused by high-risk alcohol users but experienced secondhand by others, we can mobilize broad support for stricter policies and enforcement. Campus officials, parents, and students themselves are worried about safety, not the level of alcohol consumption *per se*.

Successful public health campaigns eventually reach a critical juncture, the point at which the members of the majority community recognize that they are indeed a majority, that they share certain pro-health values, and that they support policy changes to eliminate or reduce the problems caused by others. We can advance this realization among college and university students, but not if we use an overencompassing definition that both demonizes students who are using alcohol responsibly and perpetuates widespread misperceptions of the drinking norm.

We see reasons for optimism. If a majority of students support policy changes to reduce high-risk alcohol use on campus, our job as prevention professionals is to help generate and mobilize this support.

Helen C. Stubbs is a research assistant and William DeJong, Ph.D., is the director of the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention.

[1] Wechsler, H., Lee, J.E., Kuo, M., Lee, H. "College Binge Drinking in the 1990s: A Continuing Problem." *Journal of American College Health* 48 (2000): 199–210.
[2] Wechsler, H., Nelson, T., Weitzman, E. "From Knowledge to Action: How Harvard's College Alcohol Study Can Help Your Campus Design a Campaign Against Student Alcohol Abuse." *Change* 32, no. 1 (2000): 38–43.

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Network
OF COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES
Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse

News from the Regions

At the close of the 1999–2000 academic year, the Network regions reported on activities in their areas. Here are highlights from those reports:

Alabama/Florida/Georgia

The big event was a peer education conference in Florida that drew more than 40 participants from the region. In addition, the region has launched a newsletter to aid communication among Network members. Georgia convened its 10th Georgia Network Training Institute and continues to hold monthly meetings of steering committee members of the Georgia Network of Colleges and Universities.

Alaska/Idaho/Montana/Oregon/Washington

The Oregon Governor's Task Force on Underage Drinking met monthly. Network members held a regional conference and a Summit 2000 Wellness conference. Plans are in place to launch a statewide initiative.

Arizona/Nevada/Utah

Arizona was awarded a Department of Education Consortia Grant. The Tri-University Social Norms Medical campaign was launched, and an Arizona statewide prevention initiative kicked off with the Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, and the University of Arizona presidents' signing event in February.

In addition, Utah has continued its statewide efforts and is developing a collegiate survey. It also convened a statewide student follow-up conference, which drew student teams from across the state.

Arkansas/Louisiana/Mississippi

Network members participated in conferences in Arkansas and Louisiana and staffed a booth at the American Association of Counselor Education and Supervision conference in New Orleans.

California/Guam/Hawaii

Plans are in place for the Network to sponsor collaborative events with the Higher Education Center at the upcoming California Prevention Summit. In addition, Network members are now linked for information-sharing through an Internet listserv.

Delaware/New Jersey

The Network hosted quarterly consortium meetings to monitor progress on New Jersey's statewide prevention initiative and to receive training on social norms approaches for reducing problem alcohol use with support from a New Jersey Department of Health three-year grant. This region also launched a pilot project comic strip series in collaboration with the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey.

District of Columbia/ Maryland/ Virginia/ West Virginia

West Virginia and Maryland cohosted a Higher Education Center training. Virginia also convened a Center training event and continued working with the statewide task force. Washington, D.C., members participated in a task force on high-risk alcohol use.

Indiana

The region held a campus and community mini-grant competition, and Network members participated in panels on underage drinking across the state. The Network also conducted a follow-up survey with presidents and alcohol and other drug prevention professionals on a statewide initiative.

Iowa/Minnesota/Wisconsin

Network members participated in a metrowide initiative in Minneapolis/St. Paul, funded in part by the Department of Public Safety. In Iowa, Network members worked on a legislative initiative to impose criminal penalties for alcohol possession by minors in residence halls at any private or public campus. That state also received funding from its Department of Juvenile Justice for a five-campus social norms initiative.

Kentucky

The Network received a Department of Education coalition grant and convened a Center coalition training event. It also launched its Web page.

Michigan

The Network convened a statewide regional meeting and published eight issues of its newsletter. It focused on reorganizing and revitalizing its statewide coalition with a regional focus and pursued developing a regional Network Web site.

Nebraska/North Dakota/South Dakota

The Network convened a regional conference with a focus on social norms and developing statewide coalitions.

North Carolina/South Carolina

The Network convened a regional meeting at Davidson College in Davidson, N.C., that attracted 74 representatives from 12 institutions of higher education. It also arranged a regional teleconference at The University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

(Continued on next page)

New Network Web Pages

Regional coordinators have been developing Web sites to support collaborations and their regional activities, such as meetings, and conferences. To visit these sites, go to the Higher Education Center's site at http://www.edc.org/hec and click on "The Network," then on "Regions." From there, follow the prompts to specific regions to find out about current events and other information.

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Welcome New Network Members

- Berea College, Berea, Ky.
- Briar Cliff College, Sioux City, Iowa
- Central Kentucky Technical College, Lexington, Ky.
- Coastal Carolina University, Conway, S.C.
- Goodwin College, East Hartford, Conn.
- Maysville Community College, Maysville, Ky.
- Montreat College, Montreat, N.C.
- Ohio Dominican College, Columbus, Ohio
- The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
- St. John's University, Jamaica, N.Y.
- State University College of Technology at Delhi, Delhi, N.Y.
- Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Tex.
- University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pa.
- Washington College, Chestertown, Md.
- West Kentucky Technical College, Paducah, Ky.

How to Join the Network

To join the Network, the president of your college or university must submit a letter indicating the institution's commitment to implement the Network's Standards on your campus. Please include the name, address, and phone number of the contact person for the institution. Mail or fax to the following address:

The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02458-1060
Fax: (617) 928-1537

The Network is committed to helping member institutions promote a healthy campus environment by decreasing alcohol and other drug abuse.

(Continued from page 9)

News from the Regions

Ohio

The Network organized a student leadership initiative workshop, community policing training, and policy forum training. Ten Network member institutions received mini-grants to address community policing strategies. The Network also distributed newsletters to Network schools.

Pennsylvania

The region and the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) have forged a relationship to further the agenda of each organization in the coming years. This relationship was visible at the U.S. Department of Education's 14th Annual National Meeting in October 2000 in Pittsburgh, which was cosponsored by the PLCB. Also, the regional coordinator participates in a statewide coalition addressing alcohol, high-risk alcohol use, and collegiate life.

Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands

Some 350 people attended the Network's 10th Annual Conference in November 1999 in San Juan. The Network also hosted a Higher Education Center team training for 50 participants from a number of campuses.

Texas

The Network participated in a peer education conference at Texas A&M, Kingsville, and had an article on using social norms marketing campaigns published in the newsletter of the Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators. Also, the regional coordinator joined the statewide coalition to prevent underage drinking.

Georgia Network's Outstanding Service Award

The Georgia Network honored Carole Middlebrooks with its first Outstanding Service Award while celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Georgia Network Training Institute in February. Middlebrooks has chaired the Georgia Network—which now has 33 institutions of higher education as members—since its inception.

Cited for her leadership in developing the Georgia Network as a statewide coalition, Middlebrooks has attracted resources over the past decade from the Regents of the University of Georgia system, the state's Mothers Against Drunk Driving chapter, the state's traffic safety office, and the U.S. Department of Education. In addition,

Middlebrooks heads the state Network's steering committee, which meets monthly to address AOD prevention issues. She also is chair of the national Network's executive committee and coordinator for the AOD program at the University of Georgia, Athens.

Three New Regional Coordinators

The Network welcomes three new regional coordinators: Jo Ann Autry (Arizona/Nevada/Utah), Brian Light (Kansas/Missouri/Oklahoma), and Julie Thompson (Iowa/Minnesota/Wisconsin).

Autry has been the director of the Student Wellness Center at Utah State University in Logan since 1987 and a member of the Utah State Substance Abuse Prevention consortia since it began in 1990.

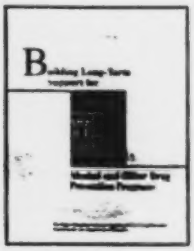
Light is the program coordinator for the Partners in Prevention State AOD Prevention Coalition at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Light received both his bachelor of arts and master of arts from the University of Missouri, Columbia, and has worked in student wellness and AOD prevention on that campus since 1994. He is the past Missouri state coordinator for BACCHUS.

Thompson has been the coordinator of the Sexual and Substance Abuse Education and Prevention programs at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, since 1992 and has served as a Center Associate for three years.

Publications

How to Obtain Our Publications

The Center has more than 70 publications ranging from fact sheets and newsletters to bulletins and guides. Most of our publications are downloadable from our Web site: http://www.edc.org/hec. Check our Web site also for training opportunities, news, and links. Or call us at (800) 676-1730.



Building Long-Term Support for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Programs

by William DeJong and Laurie Davidson

Section 1, "Building a Program for Long-Term Survival," explains why early planning should focus on collaboration within the campus community, a strong commitment from senior institutional administrators, an established long-range plan, objectives tied to the campus mission, networking outside the campus community, a system of program accountability, and the strategic use of public relations.

Section 2, "Identifying Alternative Sources of Funding," discusses several components of successful grant-writing, including developing a clear program concept, thinking like a marketer, working in partnership with the development office, identifying state and federal sources of prevention funding, and locating sources of information and assistance. Web sites for resources described in the publication can be accessed through links on the Center's site at http://www.edc.org/hec.

(This publication includes some material originally published in 1995 as part of *Institutionalizing Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Programs*.)
15 pp. Code # 202 2000

Rites of Spring: Exploring Strategies for System Change: A White Paper Prepared for DRUGS DON'T WORK!, The Governor's Prevention Partnership

by the Silver Gate Group

In October 1998, representatives from nine colleges and universities gathered in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education's National Meeting for Alcohol, Other Drug, and Violence Prevention in Crystal City, Va., to discuss student alcohol use and high-profile, alcohol-fueled disturbances.

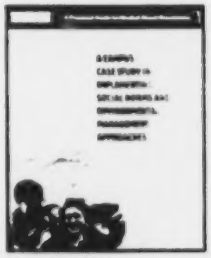
Each campus had experienced at least one of these disturbing incidents, which were often associated with binge drinking during spring weekend celebrations. These incidents had focused public attention on both the campuses and their surrounding communities.

DRUGS DON'T WORK!, The Governor's Prevention Partnership; the University of Connecticut; the University of Colorado, Boulder; the Chickering Group; and the Connecticut Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking convened teams of more than 40 campus professionals and students from the nine campuses to network, exchange ideas, and learn through a facilitated information-gathering and planning process.

Rites of Spring: Exploring Strategies for Change, the report from that meeting, describes responses to student disruptions, examines how to avoid them, and recommends ways to reduce the problem. The following recommendations were repeated often by participants in the forum and appear to show the greatest promise for reducing AOD problems:

- Focus on environmental change to discourage high-risk alcohol use and encourage healthy lifestyles. Through policies and programs, campuses can change their academic and social environments, which will shift the norm away from high-risk alcohol use and destructive behaviors.
- Create campus and community coalitions to increase communication and collaboration. Student alcohol use problems do not exist in isolation. Effective solutions require campuses and their surrounding communities to work together to both reduce problems and improve relationships between colleges, students, and community members. Coalitions open important lines of communication.
- Demonstrate presidential leadership to underscore the commitment of the campus to reducing AOD problems. High-level involvement in prevention sends an important message to students and community members, signifying an institutional commitment to change.

The report is available online through the Higher Education Center at http://www.edc.org/hec.



A Practical Guide to Alcohol Abuse Prevention: A Campus Case Study in Implementing Social Norms and Environmental Management Approaches

by Koreen Johannessen, Carolyn Collins, Beverly Mills-Novoa, and Peggy Glider

This well-designed guide from the University of Arizona (UA) describes a four-year project that decreased heavy drinking at that campus by 29.2 percent. The guide reviews the theories behind the approach, the application of social norms and environmental management approaches at UA, outcome measurement, the cost of UA's print media social norms campaign, factors that sustain efforts over time, and challenges to the field. It also lists practical steps to develop a social norms media campaign, including the selection of a format, placement, and design; production of pilot ads (what worked and what didn't); the use of marketing tests; and the implementation of the campaign.
38 pp. Code # 909 1999

Our Mission

The mission of the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention is to assist institutions of higher education in developing alcohol and other drug prevention policies and programs that will foster students' academic and social development and promote campus and community safety.

Get in Touch

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How We Can Help

- Training and professional development activities.
- Resources, referrals, and consultations.
- Publication and dissemination of prevention materials.
- Support for the Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse.
- Assessment, evaluation, and analysis activities.

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Higher Education Center Training Opportunities

The Center's two-day Team Training event brings together teams from institutions of higher education and their local communities to address AOD issues on their campus. Team members represent key campus and community systems such as AOD coordinators, senior administrators, faculty, other student service personnel, athletes, public safety and security personnel, student leaders, community representatives, and others. The training provides an opportunity for teams to develop coalition-based action plans. Call the Center to participate. *The following dates and locations are tentative. Please check our Web site for up-to-date information.*

Upcoming Team Trainings

Feb. 13, 2001 • Santa Clara, Calif.
Feb. 22, 2001 • Mount Pleasant, Mich.
Feb. 28, 2001 • Castene, Maine
May 2001 • Ark.

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